

California's Bovine Trichomonosis Program
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Bovine trichomonosis, a venereal disease of cattle caused by the **protozoa *Tritrichomonas foetus***, is a serious economic threat to California's beef herds. The organism lives in the folds of the penis and internal sheath in bulls, and colonizes the vagina, cervix, uterus and oviducts of cows causing **abortion** and **extended calving seasons**. Bulls remain persistently infected and spread infection from cow to cow during natural service, but cows generally clear infection after two to three heat cycles. Bulls over four years old are the main reservoir of infection in a herd.

The California Cattlemen's Association and the Western United Dairymen sponsored legislation to develop a trichomonosis control program. In partnership with the livestock industry, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) developed a program that became effective September 21, 2003. Since it began, CDFA has approved 156 veterinarians for trichomonosis sampling and 61 laboratories for trichomonosis testing. Approved veterinarians have diagnosed about 180 infected herds, and CDFA has notified approximately four to six neighboring herds exposed to infection for every infected herd.

To enhance the effectiveness of the trichomonosis program to control disease, the cattle industry requested the laws be strengthened. The new trichomonosis control program became **effective on October 5, 2007**. There are 12 critical areas in the program:

1. Veterinarians must be approved through training provided by CDFA to test for trichomonosis. Approvals are renewable every two years and may be renewed with the brucellosis contract.
2. All trichomonosis tests are official tests; animals require official identification and samples must be evaluated in approved laboratories. Veterinary clinics can be approved to read samples by participating in a training session at a California Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) Laboratory.
3. All test results, including negative tests, must be reported to the district Animal Health Branch office on a form supplied by CDFA within 30 days.
4. Positive trichomonosis samples must be reported to CDFA within two days of diagnosis.
5. **Confirmation of positive test results by PCR may be requested – but is not required.**
6. CDFA will investigate cases, notify owners of potentially exposed cattle, and **quarantine bulls in affected and exposed herds.**
7. **Bulls from affected herds** require three negative tests, at owner's expense, at least seven but not more than 28 days apart to move anywhere except slaughter.
8. **Bulls from exposed herds** require one negative test, at owner's expense, before movement.
9. **Bulls 18 months of age and older sold at public saleyards in California** require a negative trichomonosis test within 60 days before sale or be consigned as slaughter only.

10. **Public auction yards** must post a notice in a prominent place stating, *“All bulls 18 months of age and older must have a negative trichomonosis test or be consigned as slaughter only.”*
11. **Bulls 18 months of age and older entering California** require a negative test within 60 days unless entering for slaughter, semen collection or exhibition (not commingling with other cattle).
12. **Bulls moving into California on a pasture-to-pasture permit** require a negative test within 12 months.

For more information on the program, becoming an approved veterinarian, or to have your laboratory approved, please contact your local Animal Health Branch office.

CDFA Animal Health Branch Offices	
Sacramento (HQ)	916-654-1447
Modesto	209-491-9350
Ontario	909-947-4462
Redding	530-225-2140
Tulare	559-685-3500